

The claims defining the invention are as follows:

1. A collapsible handrail mechanism for steps or a ladder including:  
an outer stringer and an inner stringer jointly pivotable about a pivot point;  
5 a stanchion located between the outer and inner stringers and pivotally mounted to  
at least one of the stringers;  
a latching mechanism through which the stanchion passes and to which at least  
one of the stringers is pivotally mounted at the said pivot point;  
the latching mechanism having a slide plate preventing substantial downwards  
10 movement of the stanchion, a top plate preventing substantial upwards movement of the  
stanchion, and a side plate preventing substantial sideways movement of the stanchion;  
whereas, in operation of the handrail mechanism from a stowed position, when the  
stringers are lowered the stanchion is thereby forced to slide on the slide plate causing the  
stanchion to pivot about its mounting up into an operational position.

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